

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 AID-05 EB-07 EPG-02 TRSE-00 STR-04 OMB-01
CEA-01 AGRE-00 COME-00 ACDA-07 /085 W
-----115148 281940Z /41

R 281810Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5565

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ROME 10668

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CGEN, PINT, IT
SUBJECT: CONSULAR VISIT TO PERUGIA

1. SUMMARY. AN EMBOFF HAS JUST CONCLUDED A VISIT TO REGION OF UMBRIA WHICH IS COMPOSED OF PROVINCES OF PERUGIA AND TERNI, APPROXIMATELY 80 MUNICIPALITIES AND HAS A TOTAL POPULATION OF ROUGHLY 800,000. THE REGION IS UNDER FIRM CONTROL OF THE LEFT, PREDOMINANTLY THE PCI, AND IT HAS ONE OF THE 6 FRONTIST GIUNTE IN ITALY, ONE OTHER OF WHICH, LAZIO, IS ALSO WITHIN THE ROME CONSULAR DISTRICT. UMBRIA APPEARS TO BE HOLDING IT OWN ECONOMICALLY. END SUMMARY.

2. CONOFF IN CONTINUING SERIES OF CALLS WITHIN ROME CONSULAR DISTRICT VISITED PERUGIA JUNE 24 AND PAID COURTESY CALLS ON PREFECT, REGIONAL AND PROVINCIAL GIUNTA PRESIDENTS (BOTH PCI), PSI MAYOR OF THE CITY, AS WELL AS ON DC REGIONAL SECRETARY AND BISHOP OF PERUGIA. CALLS AVERAGED JUST UNDER AN HOUR AND RECEPTION WAS UNIFORMLY POLITE AND GRACIOUS.

3. PERUGIA, ALTHOUGH JUST ONLY A LITTLE OVER 100 MILES FROM ROME, APPEARS FROM LAW AND ORDER POINT OF VIEW TO BE IN ANOTHER COUNTRY. THERE ARE NO BASIC PROBLEMS
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RELATING TO CRIME OR ENFORCEMENT OF VARIOUS ORDINANCES. THE ONLY NOTICEABLE CONCERN, AS MENTIONED BY THE PREFECT, WAS A SMALL DRUG PROBLEM CENTERED IN BOTH THE UNIVERSITY OF PERUGIA AND THE UNIVERSITY FOR FOREIGNERS. THE PETIT BOURGEOIS WAY OF LIFE, SMALL POPULATION CENTERS WHICH ARE MAINLY AGRICULTURAL, THE CLOSENESS OF FAMILY LIFE AND THE HILLY GEOGRAPHY OF THE AREA ALL

CONTRIBUTE TO A GENERAL CALMNESS. A LARGE PUBLIC CELEBRATION OF THE RECENT ANNIVERSARY OF THE REPUBLIC CAUSED NOT A RIPPLE OF DISTURBANCE.

4. ON THE ECONOMIC FRONT, THERE WAS SUBSTANTIAL AGREEMENT THAT THE ECONOMIC CRISIS FACING OTHER PARTS OF ITALY HAS NOT YET BEEN FELT IN THE REGION. THIS IS PARTICULARLY TRUE IN PERUGIA PROVINCE WHICH IS CHARACTERIZED BY SMALL INDUSTRY (CHOCOLATE, PASTA, TEXTILES) AND AGRICULTURE. POTENTIAL PROBLEM AREAS DO EXIST, HOWEVER. PERUGIA, WITH 2,500 EMPLOYEES, HAS HAD A 40 PERCENT DROP IN SALES SINCE 1975 DUE MOST LIKELY TO FACT THAT CHOCOLATE AND CANDY IN ITALY ARE MORE FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS RATHER THAN DAILY CONSUMPTION AND THUS SUSCEPTIBLE TO GENERAL ECONOMIC SITUATION. POOR PROSPECTS FOR STUDENTS GRADUATING FROM UNIVERSITY IS ALSO OF CONCERN FOR THE FUTURE EVEN THOUGH THIS PROBLEM IS STILL NOT ACUTE AT THE 20,000 ENROLLMENT UNIVERSITY OF PERUGIA. PCI REGIONAL PRESIDENT INDICATED TO CONOFF HIS DESIRE TO INCREASE VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND THOSE SUBJECTS SUCH AS VETERINARY SCIENCE AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY WHICH COULD BE IN DEMAND IN AGRICULTURAL UMBRIA. DIFFICULTIES OF INDUSTRIAL COMPANIES SUCH AS FINSIDER AND MONTEDISON IN TERNI PROVINCE WERE ALSO MENTIONED. NEVERTHELESS, EMPHASIS WAS ON POSITIVE SIDE OF REGION'S ECONOMY. CONFIDENTIAL

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SEVERAL PERSONS NOTED THAT JUST AS REGION DID NOT FULLY PARTICIPATE IN BOOM OF 1960'S IT NOW NOT SUFFERING FROM CRISIS AFFECTING ITALY. FINAL FACTOR NOTED WAS THAT THOUSANDS OF UMBRIANS HAVE THEIR OWN GARDENS WITH FRUITS, VEGETABLES, CHICKENS AND RABBITS RAISED AT HOM THUS DIMINISHING THE IMPACT OF RISING PRICES.

5. POLITICALLY, UMBRIA APPEARS TO BE VERY STABLE REGION WHICH HAS HAD 30-YEAR HISTORY OF LEFTIST GOVERNMENT. THE REGIONAL GIUNTA, AS WELL AS THE PROVINCIAL AND MUNICIPAL GIUNTA OF PERUGIA, ARE ALL PCI-PSI COALITIONS, WITH PCI MEMBERS AS PRESIDENTS OF THE REGIONAL AND PROVINCIAL GIUNTE. IN THE 1975 REGIONAL ELECTIONS, THE PCI GARNERED 46 PERCENT OF THE VOTE, AND THE REGIONAL COUNCIL IS COMPOSED OF 14 PCI, 4 PSI, 1 PSDI, 1 PRI, 9 DC AND 1 MSI-DN.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ROME 10668

6. INTERESTING DIVERGENCE OF VIEWS (TACTICAL STRATEGY?) EMERGED IN CONVERSATIONS WITH PCI PRESIDENTS OF REGIONAL AND PROVINCIAL GIUNTE REGARDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH OPPOSITION DC. REGIONAL PRESIDENT PROF. GERMANO MARRI STATED HE WOULD BE WILLING OPEN DOOR TO DC WITH AN INSTITUTIONAL AGREEMENT ("ACCORDO ISTITUZIONALE") BY WHICH THE DC WOULD BE OFFERED PRESIDENCY OF THE REGIONAL COUNCIL. MARRI NOTED THAT A PROGRAMMATIC AGREEMENT ("ACCORDO PROGRAMMATICO") WAS NOT IMMEDIATELY NECESSARY BUT COULD COME AT A LATER DATE. HOWEVER, THE DC APPEARED OPPOSED AND THE PSI WAS DEFINITELY AGAINST SUCH AN AGREEMENT. RPOVINCIAL PRESIDENT DR. VINCI GROSSI DOES NOT SUBSCRIBE TO THIS LINE STRESSING THAT AN "ACCORDO ISTITUZIONALE" SERVES NO PURPOSE. THERE MUST FIRST BE A BASIS FOR COOPERATION WITH AN "ACCORDO PROGRAMMATICO."

7. TO HEAR "OTHER SIDE," CONOFF ALSO CALLED ON DC REGIONAL SECRETARY FOR UMBRIA, DR. IDO CARNEVALI, AS WELL AS BISHOP OF PERUGIA, MSGR. FERDINANDO LAMBRUSCHINI. REGARDING AN INSTITUTIONAL AGREEMENT WHEREBY DC WOULD HOLD PRESIDENCY OF REGIONAL COUNCIL, DR. CARNEVALI STATED DC WOULD NOT BE OPPOSED
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IF FOLLOWING CONDITIONS WERE MET: THE PSI AGREED;
IT BE PUBLICLY UNDERSTOOD THAT THE DC WAS AGREEABLE ONLY TO AN INSTITUTIONAL AGREEMENT AS DISTINCT FROM A PROGRAMMATIC ACCORD IN ORDER THAT UMBRIANS DID NOT

MISINTERPRET THE DC'S ACTION AS SUPPORT FOR THE PCI;
AND THERE BE NO DEALS MADE IN SECRET. BOTH DC REGIONAL
SECRETARY AND BISHOP SEEMED RESIGNED TO CONTINUED
DOMINANT POSITION OF PCI IN UMBRIA AND FORESAW NO
BASIC CHANGE IN DC'S POLITICAL PROSPECTS IN NEAR
FUTURE. THE BISHOP IN PARTICULAR DID NOT SEE MUCH
HOPE THAT PCI COULD BE TURNED BACK. IN REPLY TO
CONOFF'S QUESTION AS TO WHETHER A CHURCH DIALOGUE WITH
PCI IN UMBRIA HAD BEEN CONSIDERED, BISHOP STATED THAT
THIS WAS ALREADY A FACT FOR SOME TIME. IN PASSING,
THE BISHOP ALSO INDIRECTLY CRITICIZED THE VATICAN FOR
HAVING MADE DIVORCE AND NOW ABORTION POLITICAL ISSUES
WHICH COULD ONLY WORK TO THE DETRIMENT OF THE DC.

8. ONLY COMMENTS CONCERNING NATIONAL POLITICAL SCENE
CAME FROM PSI PERUGIA MAYOR, GIOVANNI PERARI, WHOSE
PARTY WAS ROUNDLY CRITICIZED BY BOTH PCI AND DC
INTERLOCUTORS WHO SAW PSI AS OBSTRUCTIONISTS WHO DID
NOT KNOW WHAT THEY WANTED. PERARI, UNSYMPATHETIC
TOWARD AND DISTRUSTFUL OF THE PCI, BELIEVES THAT AN
AGREEMENT AMONG THE PARTIES OF THE SO-CALLED
CONSTITUTIONAL ARC (EXCLUDING THE MSI-DN) IS
ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY AT THE PRESENT TIME BUT WOULD NOT
BE A FINAL SOLUTION. IT WOULD BE ONLY A MEANS OF
BRINGING ABOUT A CERTAIN DEGREE OF STABILITY BUT AFTER
A MAXIMUM PERIOD OF 3 - 4 YEARS WOULD HAVE TO BE
ABANDONED FOR NEW ELECTIONS. PERARI SEES DC CURRENTLY
ON THE UPSWING, AND ROLE OF PSI AS A NECESSARY
COUNTERBALANCE BETWEEN THE DC AND PCI. GARDNER
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